

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the resolution be printed following my remarks.

H. RES. —

Whereas the people of the United States generate approximately 208,000,000 tons of municipal solid waste each year, or 4.3 pounds per person per day;

Whereas the average office worker in the United States generates between 120 and 150 pounds of recoverable white office paper a year;

Whereas the Environmental Protection Agency recently estimated that the recycling rate in the United States has reached 27 percent of the solid waste stream;

Whereas making products from recycled materials allows the people of the United States to get the most use of every tree, every gallon of oil, every pound of mineral, every drop of water, and every kilowatt of energy that goes into the products they buy;

Whereas manufacturing from recycled materials creates less waste and fewer emissions;

Whereas recycling saves energy, reducing the need to deplete nonrenewable energy resources;

Whereas it is estimated that 9 jobs are created for every 15,000 tons of solid waste recycled into new products;

Whereas recycling is completed only when recovered materials are returned to retailers as new products and are purchased by consumers;

Whereas buying recycled products conserves resources and energy, reduces waste and pollution, and creates jobs;

Whereas more than 4,500 recycled products are now available to consumers;

Whereas the United States has a two-way, use and reuse system of recycling and buying recyclables; and

Whereas Americans support recycling, but need a regular reminder of the importance of buying recycled content products, the availability of recycled content products, and how to recycle: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that November 15, 1997, and November 15, 1998, should each be designated as "America Recycles Day"; and

(2) the House of Representatives requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe each America Recycles Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

OHIO LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, the week of September 22–27, 1997, has been recognized in my home State as Ohio Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week. Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse [OCALA] has worked tirelessly over the last few years to help reform our legal system. Citizens across the State of Ohio have organized behind OCALA to fight the problems of lawsuit abuse. Almost everyone agrees that America has become an overly litigious society. In the Federal courts alone, the number of lawsuits filed each year has tripled in the last 30 years to more than 260,000 cases per year. This dramatic growth in litigation carries high costs for the U.S. economy: manufactur-

ers raise their prices, withdraw products from the market, discontinue product research, and reduce their work force. The total cost of litigation in the United States is estimated to be approximately \$150 billion per year, substantially higher than any other country and 2½ times the international average. While it is important to protect those who are truly victims, we must reform our system to prevent frivolous lawsuits.

Republicans in the 104th Congress worked hard for meaningful reform of our Nation's legal system, and over the President's veto we enacted legislation protecting employers from abusive strike suits brought by the securities bar. Unfortunately, our efforts with broader-based legislation intended to end lawsuit abuse, restore fairness to the legal system, and ensure that real victims—not greedy lawyers—are fairly compensated was vetoed by President Clinton at the urging of trial lawyers.

Despite this setback, I will continue to work hard with my colleagues in Congress and with organizations like OCALA to pass bipartisan, commonsense legislation that will end lawsuit abuse and protect American consumers and workers.

While OCALA has thousands of supporters in the State of Ohio, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize some individuals who have given countless hours to advance the need for ending lawsuit abuse. They are Dana Smith, executive director of OCALA, Jackie Fox, chairwomen, Dr. Claire Wolfe, Dr. David Rummel, Gerald Miller, Ken Blair, Jr., James Martin, Orin Elliott, Jack Koester, and Peter Beck, each directors and supporters of the continual efforts of OCALA.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend all of the individuals who are involved in Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse for their dedication to this important endeavor. Ohio and the country as a whole need organizations like OCALA which will continue to fight against lawsuit abuse and for legal reform that is fair to all American citizens.

INTRODUCING THE 21ST CENTURY STUDENT FINANCIAL AID SYS- TEM IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1997

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the 21st Century Student Financial Aid System Improvement Act.

This month the class of 2001, the first class of students to graduate in the new millennium, entered college. These students are preparing for the challenges of the information age. Unfortunately the system to help them finance their education is not measuring up to the same challenges.

As chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over Federal higher education policy, I am responsible for the programs which provide Federal assistance in obtaining a higher education. I am pleased that the ranking minority member of that subcommittee, Mr. KILDEE has joined me as an original cosponsor of this legislation. We have listened to students, parents, and college officials, with whom we share the goals of—a simple and less bureaucratic system of student aid; a

modern student aid system which is easy for students and parents to use; and an efficient and less expensive system that ensures that taxpayer funds are being well spent.

Unfortunately, today, under the current system, taxpayers are paying more and students are getting less. The Department of Education's budget for information systems has tripled over the last 5 years. Next year alone it will spend over \$300 million on systems contracts to deliver student aid. Yet despite these significant expenditures, the current system is still wrapped in miles of redtape, requires dozens of paper forms, and suffers from needless processing delays and breakdowns.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is a better way for the Department of Education to do business. In fact, under the legislation that I am proposing today, the Department's student financial aid systems would be run more like a business—adopting the best practices from the private sector and focusing on bottom line results.

This legislation would establish a business-like performance based organization to manage the computer systems thereby ensuring that the Department of Education is not wasting money due to poor contract management. The Chief Operating Officer hired to manage this organization will be charged with: Simplifying the process of applying for financial aid for students and their families; and integrating student financial aid systems to improve efficiency, save money, and prevent fraud and abuse in the programs.

According to the GAO, the Department of Education has failed to resolve its longstanding management problems in the Office of Postsecondary Education, its data quality and management controls are inadequate, and its financial statements for the student loan programs cannot be audited. A customer-focused, performance-based organization within the Department, run by an experienced Chief Operating Officer, can take the steps necessary to properly reengineer the current systems and contracts. In fact, the Department's own inspector general and the Independent Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance have both advocated this approach. It is also consistent with the recommendation to fundamentally restructure the routine processing of Federal student aid to take advantage of the best private sector practices, which was put forth to the subcommittee by the American Council on Education and 22 higher education associations in their recommendations for their reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

This legislation would also require the Secretary to work cooperatively with the higher education community to adopt common and open electronic data standards for key elements in the delivery system such as digital signatures, personal identification numbers, and single institutional identifiers. By adopting these common standards, we can make great strides in simplification by eliminating paper forms, and unnecessary steps in the current process.

Students and their families deserve a modern student aid system that meets their needs. I urge my colleagues to join Mr. KILDEE and me in this effort, and to cosponsor this important legislation.